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THE

Circular Letter

OF THE

ELDERS AND MESS

OF THE SEVERAL

BAPTIST CHU

OF THE

WESTERN ASSOCIATIONS IN WALES;

ASSEMBLED

At Ffynnon-Henry, Carmarthenshire; at Blaenwaun, Pembrokeshire; and at Penycoed, Cardiganshire; in the Year 1834;

TO THE

Several Baptist Churches they represent: maintaining the important doctrine of Three Equal Persons in the Godhead; proper Deity and real Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; eternal and personal Election; particular Redemption; free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; effectual Calling; the final perseverance of the Saints, &c.

J. THOMAS, PRINTER, ST. MARY-STREET
CARDIGAN.

1834.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER, &c.

Christian Brethren,

After having, through the tender mercy of our God, met once more in our annual Associations, and heard your letters to us, which, for the most part bemoaned because of unsuccessfulness, (in its different forms of deadness,) contentions, immorality, and uniformity. We are this year again, as customarily, addressing you with few remarks and exhortations, which we consider absolutely necessary for you to attend to and exercise: and you can depend, that they are exhortations from some of us *for the last time*; yea, to some of you also *for the last time*. Oh! how serious and deliberate ought we be, by considering that the day of our labour is speedily hastening to its close, the night of death on overtaking us, and that our eternal home is at hand. Whom will many of us be before another year's end? Is our work likely to be finished with the setting of the sun? Will it be said to each of us, "Well done thou good and faithful servant:" or, will it be said of us as it was said of the woman of old, "She hath done what she could."

We [illegible] last year, in the most alarming manner, to avoid the commission of neglecting your own assembling together; still, notwithstanding every warning, we often heard, for our grief, that the same individuals were keeping the monthly prayer-meeting: the same kept their places in the preparatory meeting: and that the same contributed faithfully, according to their circumstances, towards the support and promotion of the [illegible] interest. We can not speaking of power to contribute, but the promptness of the will. The two mites of the widow are still in remembrance, the cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not be forgotten. We are forced to think that one of the worst evils to society is, want of unity. There may

be societies that excel us in this, though we excel them with respect to the purity of the exercises. Therefore we shall call your attention to christian union.—And we shall notice the Union itself.—The necessity of it.—And give few directions how to attain to, and continue it.

I. The union itself. Union exists in perfection in heaven betwixt all the redeemed.—And it will exist on earth in a degree much more extensive before the end of time, than it is at present, when the "Watchmen shall see eye to eye," and when the greatest number, if not all, become one, and horseconciled to serve the Lord. Saints of different places, ranks and casts, are members of Christ's body, which is called in general, his mystical body, to distinguish it from his human body. Much is said of this mystical body in the 12th chapter of 1 Cor. He, as one soul and spirit, excites, or puts in action, all this body, both in heaven and earth. God said, concerning penitent sinners, "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." Jer. 32, 39. Moreover, the same Holy Ghost is the Conductor and Comforter of all the saints: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8, 9. They participate of the same graces; they have to walk by the same line of conduct; they have the same Father; and the same inheritance is to be inherited by them hereafter. We are exhorted to make our endeavours to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and the apostle says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4, 3—6.

II. Let us observe the necessity of identity and unity of operations.—1. The enemies that fight against Zion, though they hate one another, unite to injure her. Principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places, are bound by the chain of unity to the same hellish design of injuring the saints of the Most High. Though we cannot admire God sufficiently for his gracious scheme of protecting the weakest believer from being vanquished by the "gates of hell;" still, we cannot less than lament much, and weep bitterly, that the united foes have wounded so many of the soldiers of Jesus. Oh! the

hosts that are fallen through intoxication; and the hundreds are taken from the church to the world, by adultery! And, alas! the number did pride trip from the summit of the pinacle of superiority! Trifle with excess, that is, with more than is necessary to support nature, most frequently leads to intoxication rather than to moderation. Misapprehension, that marriage is mere an agreement between two young persons, devoted to the matrimonial state, without no regard to the custom of the country, nor a celebration of the agreement before witnesses, leads easily to adultery. And the man that cherishes good opinion of himself, is likely to be wounded in the field, if not worse, namely, signify that spiritual life was never in his possession. The exhortation of the apostle is applicable to those of this description,—"Be not high-minded, but fear." Rom. 11. 20. Therefore, if the armies of Beelzebub are united in their operations, is it not necessary that the soldiers of Christ should be united? Doubtless it is, and we will say, "Let brotherly love continue."—2. Our spiritual consolations are as severals, incumbent upon, and connected with the unity of the society, or the societies to which we belong. The members of the christian church are companions, and it is necessary for each member to love his fellow-members, and discharge all sociable duties towards them, according to the precepts of God's word. When there is a defect in brotherly love, or defect in the execution of our duties towards our brethren, there will be a cloud suspending over our confidence, and God displeased at us. Those that possess brotherly love can say, We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. 1 John 3. 14. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. 1 John 2. 10. Again, we believe that churches can support their independency fully as well, and yet be more united with regard to the unity of the association. Many excellent plan became annihilated, because the want of co-operation in the churches. The right order of the churches; the home and foreign mission, and the debt of the chapels, show the necessity of anniversary unity, and the co-operation of the churches.—3. & finally. Let us remark, that the prosperity of the kingdom that is not of this world, depends much on the unity of its subjects. Christ, when praying, said, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in them,

that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17. 21. In order to show the great importance of the unity between the professors of religion, Christ mentions it in his excellent prayer, in four different places. It appears if all the professors of christian religion were united in one, that the world would be more godly: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Doubtless there will be blessed unity existing, when "all the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." At this time there will be an accomplishment of the promise in Isaiah 52. 8. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Inasmuch as the prosperity of genuine religion rests upon the unity of its adherents, should it not be desirable that all those who hold not the head, on whom there are symptoms of piety, join to relinquish their prejudice and errors, to meet together at the throne of grace, willing to be guided by the word of God, which no one hath a rite to alter, and shall not be changed by divine claims:—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." In the present circumstances of things, the inquirer roves towards Zion in the desert of confusion incompetent to decide what denomination is on the best road. Are not the different parties a great obstacle to the Jews, to look at Him whom they have pierced, and say; "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

Again, if it is superfluous for us to expect universal unity in our days, nevertheless, it is not unexpedient for us to pray for it, and to expect members of our own denomination, and of the same society, to co-operate according to the golden rule; "Striving together for the faith of the gospel." If otherwise, the admonition is, "Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." "How can a kingdom divided against itself, stand?"

III. We shall give few directions how to attain to, and cultivate christian union.—1. Being careful in forming the churches of proper persons "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The regenerate alone will be useful with religion; and to him only religion availeth, and is rendered beneficial. Living stones are becoming to the spiritual edifice, and will be compacted

with the living foundation. Materials to be burnt are, wood, hay, and stubble, by which terms, as some maintain, hypocrites are described. See 1 Cor. 3. 9—17.

2. Unity of sentiments is necessary, especially concerning the supreme Person of our Mediator, his offices, his suretiship, the scheme of grace, and the work of the Holy Ghost. It is impossible to be a true member of the body of Christ, without holding the head, when slighting his Person, denying the value of his sacrifice, despising the efficacy of his blood, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. 10. 27. 3. It is necessary to associate more than we do in general. It is not sufficient that every member should comply with our excellent letter, the last year; and even comply with the inspired exhortation itself,—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;" because a person may keep his place, without doing much good to himself nor to others. Useless things are too often the topics of conversation even on the Lord's day; and not what God does to the souls of sinners. If the members were more faithful in exhorting, warning, and reproving one another, the Sabbath would be less violated, through indolence, amusements, and evil communications. Simony is devoting the oppertunity of God at the things of this world. Further, if there were a thorough reform taking place in conversing, many would be refrained from being a reproach to the foolish and a song to the drunkard; and there would not be the painful necessity of excluding so frequently and universally.

4. There is need to pray more, to pray better, to pray oftener and more fervently. Praying in the Holy Ghost, and for the Holy Ghost to own all our feeble efforts with the religion of the Son of God. There is necessity of praying more unitedly, because unanimity is necessary for the prosperity of associated prayer. "Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven. For when two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mat. 18. 19, 20.

Lastly. Avoid the detestable sins of slander, detraction, and calumny, which have spoiled flourishing societies before now; endeavour every possible way, not to

entertain men that are guilty of them. We shall conclude our epistle to you by saying, in the words of the apostle—"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. —Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you. Phil. 4. 8, 9.

THE CARMARTHENSHIRE ASSOCIATION,

Was held at Pfynnon-Henry, June 9, 10, 1834.

Monday, at 11 o'clock, conference began by reading and praying, and the subsequent resolutions were agreed upon:

1. That the letter to the churches, written by Brother H. Davies, Llanglofan, be printed.

2. That the churches at Sardis, Bwlchnewydd, and Kidwely, be received members of the Association.

3. That the Missionary Meeting of this County, is to be held at Llangendeyrn, on Thursday and Friday, the 31st of June, and the 1st of August. All the Churches are requested to send their collections towards defraying the debt that remains on the Chapels of this County to Carmarthen, on Wednesday previous, viz the 30th of July.

4. That the churches at Llanfynydd, Porthyrhyd, and Llanelly, be permitted to go through the churches to collect towards defraying the debt that remains on their meeting-houses.

5. That the Association of the ensuing year, be held at Salem, the second Monday and Tuesday in June, 1835, the conference to commence at eleven.

6. That prayer meeting be held in the churches, at seven o'clock in the morning of the first Sabbath in August, to implore the divine blessing on the ministry, and more extensive out-pouring of the influence of the Holy Ghost on our churches.

At 2, Brother John Davies of Sittim, prayed; and Brother J. Williams, Aberdnar, preached from 2 Chron. 15. 7. and Brother J. Evans, Llandilo, concluded through prayer.

At 6, Brother —— prayed and preached, and followed by Brethren T. Williams, Ebenezer, and W. Evans, Aberystwyth, from Ps. 84. 7. Gen. 50. 20. and Phil. 1. 27.

Tuesday at 7, Brother T. Jones, prayed, and the Brethren B. Williams, Beulah, and J Williams, Pontypool, preached from Phil. 3. 10,11. Lev. 17. 11.

At 10, Brother J Watkins, Carmarthen, prayed; Brethren T. Thomas, Newcastle; D. R. Stephen, Swansea; and F. Hiley, Llanwenarth, preached, from Micah 2. 13. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 18.

At 2, Brother D. Bowen, Llanelly, prayed; and the Brethren D. Jones, Liverpool; and D. Davies, Swansea, preached, from Ex. 15. 11. Mat. 22. 12.

JAMES DAVIES, MODERATOR.
TIMOTHY THOMAS, SECRETARY.

INCIDENTS.

Brother B. Thomas (formerly of Kilgerran) was ordained Pastor to the church at Penrhiwgoch; and Brother J. Reynolds at Kidwelly.

Baptized	187	282
Restored	95	
Excluded	123	204
Died	81	
Clear increase		78

The number of Churches in this Association (branches not included) is 38.

THE PEMBROKESHIRE ASSOCIATION,

Was held at Blaenwaun, June 10, 11, 1834.

The first day at 10, the conference commenced, Brother T. E. Thomas, Ffynnon, prayed; the subsequent resolutions were agreed upon:

1. That the letter to the churches, written by Brother H. Davies, Llangloffan, be printed.
2. That the churches at Carmel, and Galilee, be received members of the Association.
3. That the churches at Marloes, and Pembroke; Bethel, Montgomeryshire; Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire; and Bangor, Carnarvonshire, be permitted to go through the churches in this association, to collect towards liquidating the expences that remain on their chapels.
4. That the next Missionary Meeting be held at Llangloffan.
5. That the Association of the ensuing year be held at Carmel, on the second Wednesday and Thursday in June, 1835.

6. That encouragement be given to our friends, to receive the Sermons of our venerable brother Christmas Evans.

7. That prayer-meeting be held on the first Sabbath morning in August, at 7 o'clock, to implore the Divine Being for a more extensive out-pouring the of Holy Ghost on our churches.

THOMAS JONES, MODERATOR.
HENRY DAVIES, SECRETARY.

At 2, the public service commenced in the field, when the Brother J. Davies, Pantycelyn, read and prayed; Brethren T. Harris, Merthyr: and D. Jones, Liverpool, preached, from 2 Cor. 5. 21. and 1 John 2. 1.

At 6, in St. Dogmells, Brother D. Owen, Bethel, prayed; Brethren R. Roberts, Swyddffynnon, and J. James, Beula; preached from Prov. 18. 24. and Isaiah 25. 6.

Thursday at 7, in the morning, conference was held with the ministers in the chapel, and at the same time public service was held in the field, when Brother T. Evans, Jesreel, prayed; Brethren J. Williams, Pontypool; and B. Williams, Beulah, preached, from Mat. 14. 30, 31. Rom. 2. 15.

At 10, Brother W. Roberts, Llanrhystyd, prayed; Brethren W. Morgans, Holyhead; J. Edwards, Nottingham; (in english) and Christmas Evans, Carnarfon; preached from 1 Peter 5. 11. Mat. 28. 6. Rev. 5. 9.

At 2, Brother D. Rowland, Pwllheli, prayed; Brethren D. Davies, Swansea; F. Hiley, Llanwenarth, preached, from Eph. 2. 16. Isaiah 66. 2 and Brother T. Thomas, Newcastle, concluded by prayer.

At 7, in St. Dogmells, Brother T. Jones, Ruthin, prayed; and Brethren D. R. Stephen, Swansea; and J. Edwards, Nantyglo, preached, from James 2. 17. Zec. 9. 9.

Collections were made for the Baptist Home Missionary Society.

INCIDENTS.

Brother John Morgan, of Bradford Academy, was ordained Pastor to the Church at Pater.

Baptised	196	
Restored	72	269
Received by Letter	1	
Excluded	93	
Died	64	159
Dismissed by Letters	2	
Clear increase		110

The number of Churches in this Association (branches not included) is 30.

THE CARDIGANSHIRE ASSOCIATION,

Was held at Penycoed, June 17, 18, 1834.

Met the first day at 10, in conference, Brother O. Williams, prayed; and after the following resolutions were agreed upon, Brother G. Griffiths, (Independent) concluded by prayer:

1. That the letter to the churches, written by Brother H. Davies, Llangloffan, be printed.

2. That the churches at Marloes and Pembroke, Pembrokeshire; Bethel, Montgomeryshire; Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire; and Bangor, Carnarvonshire, be permitted to go through the churches to collect towards defraying the debt of their chapels.

3. That the next Missionary Meeting, be held at Llwyndafydd, next August.

4. That the church at Cardigan be restored to the Association, according to the resolution past in the quarterly meeting that was held in the aforesaid Town on 1st February.

5. That the next Association be held at Penrhyncoch, on the third Tuesday and Wednesday in June, 1835.

6. That a prayer-meeting be held at 7 o'clock in the morning of the first Sabbath in August, to implore for more ample outpouring of the Holy Ghost on our churches.

WILLIAM EVANS, MODERATOR.
JOSHUA M. THOMAS, SECRETARY.

At 2, Brother R. Roberts, Swyddffynnon, prayed; Brethren J. Evans, (formerly of Llandilo,) and J. Edwards, Nantyglo, preached from Ps. 118. 25. Heb. 9. 14.

At 6, Brethren D. Roberts, Penrhyncoch, and T. Thomas, Newcastle, preached, from Rom 6. 21. 2 Tim. 2. 20.

At 7, on Wednesday, Brother R. Hughes, Sion chapel, prayed; brother D. Jones, Cwmsarnddu, preached from 1 Tim. 2. 5.

At 10, brother W. Evans, Aberystwyth, prayed; Brethren D. Jones, Liverpool; D. R. Stephen, and Dl. Davies, Swansea; preached from Isaiah 8. 18. 2 Cor. 9. 15. Rev. 1. 18.

At 2, brother J. Morgan, Talyryn, prayed; Brethren W. Morgan, Holyhead; and F. Hiley, Llanwenarth, preached from Phil. 3. 21. Heb. 2. 17.

At 6, brethren W. R. Davies, Ebenezer; J. Morgan, Talyryn, and W. Morgan, preached, from Eph. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 5. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 18.

INCIDENTS.

In the last year, our dear Brother D. Mathias, finished his course, after being very laborious and successful for many years in Cardigan and Siloam, (Verwig.) We have the pleasure to acquaint you, that brother D. Jones, (formerly Machynlleth) is now settled at Siloam.

Baptized	92	136
Restored	42	
Received by Letters	2	
Excluded	43	80
Died	28	
Dismissed by Letters	9	
Clear increase		56

The number of Churches in this Association (branches not included) is 14.

Translated by M. E.

The Baptist Missionary Meetings, pertaining to the three South-West Association, will be held this year at the subsequent places:—

Llanelly, Tuesday and Wednesday, July 29, 30.
Cidwelly, Thursday, July 31.
LLANGENDEYRN, Thursday and Friday, July 31, and August 1.
Carmarthen, Sunday and Monday, August 3, 4.
Naberth, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 5, 6.
Milford, Thursday, August 7.
Pater, Friday, August 8.
Haverfordwest, Sunday and Monday, August 10, 11.
Bethlehem, Tuesday, August 14.
LLANGLOFFAN, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 12, 13,
Fishguard, Thursday, August 14.
Newport, Friday, August 15.
Cardigan, Sunday and Monday, August 17, 18.
Newcastle, Tuesday, August 19.
LLWYNDAFYDD, Wednesday & Thursday, August 20, 21.
Llanrhystyd, Friday, August 22.
Aberystwyth, Sunday, August 24.

The Meetings which pertain more particularly to the different Associations, will be held at *Llangendeyrn*, *Llangloffan*, and *Llwyndafydd*, and *all* the Churches are earnestly requested to bring their collections to either of the aforesaid Meetings. The Rev. Edmund Clarke, of Truro, or the Rev. James Flood, late Missionary in Jamaica, will attend at each of the above Meetings.

It is known to the Churches generally, that the Baptist Chapels in Jamaica, estimated at £20,000 were demolished during the late disturbances there; and the Committee naturely thought that the Government would reimburse the loss sustained, out of the public funds; but unfortunately for the cause of the Missionary in that Island, they have resolved to apply to Parliament for the sum of £5, 500 only for that purpose. Consequently our denomination must either make up the deficiency themselves, or detain the Missionaries from returning to the dear people of their charge. But they *must* return to their work, and I know that the Churches in our Associations will not be backward in their assistance. Awake, brethren, and listen to the voice which calls upon you from the four quarters of the globe, saying, "Help us." May we thank God, and take courage.

J. M. Thomas.

ISAAC THOMAS, PRINTER, CARDIGAN.